

March 23, 2011

To the Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on HB 1094, a ban on firearm magazines with a capacity greater than ten. For identification purposes, I am a Baptist pastor from Danbury.

In an atmosphere of hand-wringing such as exists now following the ghastly Tucson shootings, legislators may be tempted to pass laws they later see as great mistakes. It is my belief that HB 1094 is just such legislation. Admitting it may be well-intended, I respectfully submit that it is wrong-headed. I oppose it on the following four grounds:

1. I oppose HB 1094 on Judeo-Christian grounds.

The Jewish prophet Joel ordered the people, *Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong.* Joel 3:10.

Jesus Christ told His followers, *But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.* Luke 22:36

Armed self-defense is a God-given right and duty. When government takes that right away, government goes against God and God goes against government.

Romans 13:3 *For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:*

Rulers should not be a terror to good works but should praise them. Law-abiding gun owners play a significant albeit nearly-unreported role in protecting society and preventing crime. That is by anyone's definition a good work. When, before God, rulers become a terror to good works, they put in peril their right to rule.

This bill would make good men felons. I oppose it on religious grounds.

2. I oppose HB 1094 on Constitutional grounds.

The Constitution secures to the people of this country a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. One of the first duties of such a people is to secure to itself the means for the individual to protect himself against crime and the community to protect itself against tyranny. That means is a well-armed populace.

It is for precisely this reason that the first American citizens were armed with the military-grade weapons of the day. The Second Amendment was not simply to let a hunter get his deer or a family repel a home invasion.

Important as those things are, the Second Amendment secures to the people the right to keep and bear arms in the defense of their liberties. As Thomas Jefferson said, "The strongest reason for

the people to retain the right to keep and bear arms is, as a last resort, to protect themselves against tyranny in government.”

For this reason, law-abiding citizens must not have their right to keep and bear arms infringed by bans such as HB 1094. I oppose HB 1094 on Constitutional grounds.

3. I oppose HB 1084 on historical grounds.

History is filled with genocide, with atrocities perpetrated by governments upon their own people. Stalin starved the Kulaks. Hitler gassed the Jews. Pol Pot filled with bones the killing fields. Hussein bombed the Kurds, Ghaddafi his Libyans.

Our nation was born in such a time, but it could not have been if the people were disarmed. Let us remember the Boston Massacre. Let us remember the quartering of soldiers in our homes. Let us remember the burning of Danbury and all the abuses of power of an arbitrary king.

Those who fought through that war well knew, as George Washington put it in 1790, that “A free people ought...to be armed.”

To which Jefferson would add, “When the people fear their government, there is tyranny; when the government fears the people, there is liberty.” He further asked, “What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance?”

Members of the Judiciary Committee, we preserve that spirit of resistance. Having given us the ballot, our nation’s Founders also reserved to us the bullet.

4. I oppose HB 1094 on civil grounds.

Self-defense is a natural right, given by God. As such, it is a civil right secured, not granted, by the Constitution. For a government to remove or reduce the ability of a free people to defend themselves is to deprive them of their civil rights.

Governments can turn upon their people. As New Orleans reminded us, disasters also strike, when for a time lawlessness prevails and criminals run free to loot and rape and kill. Would you put a sword in the hand that would slay us and knock to the ground our own? We neither elected you nor do we pay you to deprive us of our liberties or of the means to secure them.

Please vote down HB 1094 and every similarly restrictive gun law. Thank you very much.

Respectfully,

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